

Protecting Children: An Examination of State and Local Data

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Blue Ribbon
Commission
on Child
Protection

Los Angeles, CA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Record linkages funded by the **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**, **First 5 LA**, and the **Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation**

AGENDA

■ NUMBERS

- Describe maltreatment data currently tracked and publicly available through the California Child Welfare Indicators Project

■ PERSPECTIVE

- Provide a population-based context for understanding children's risk of maltreatment and death

■ A DEVELOPING IDEA

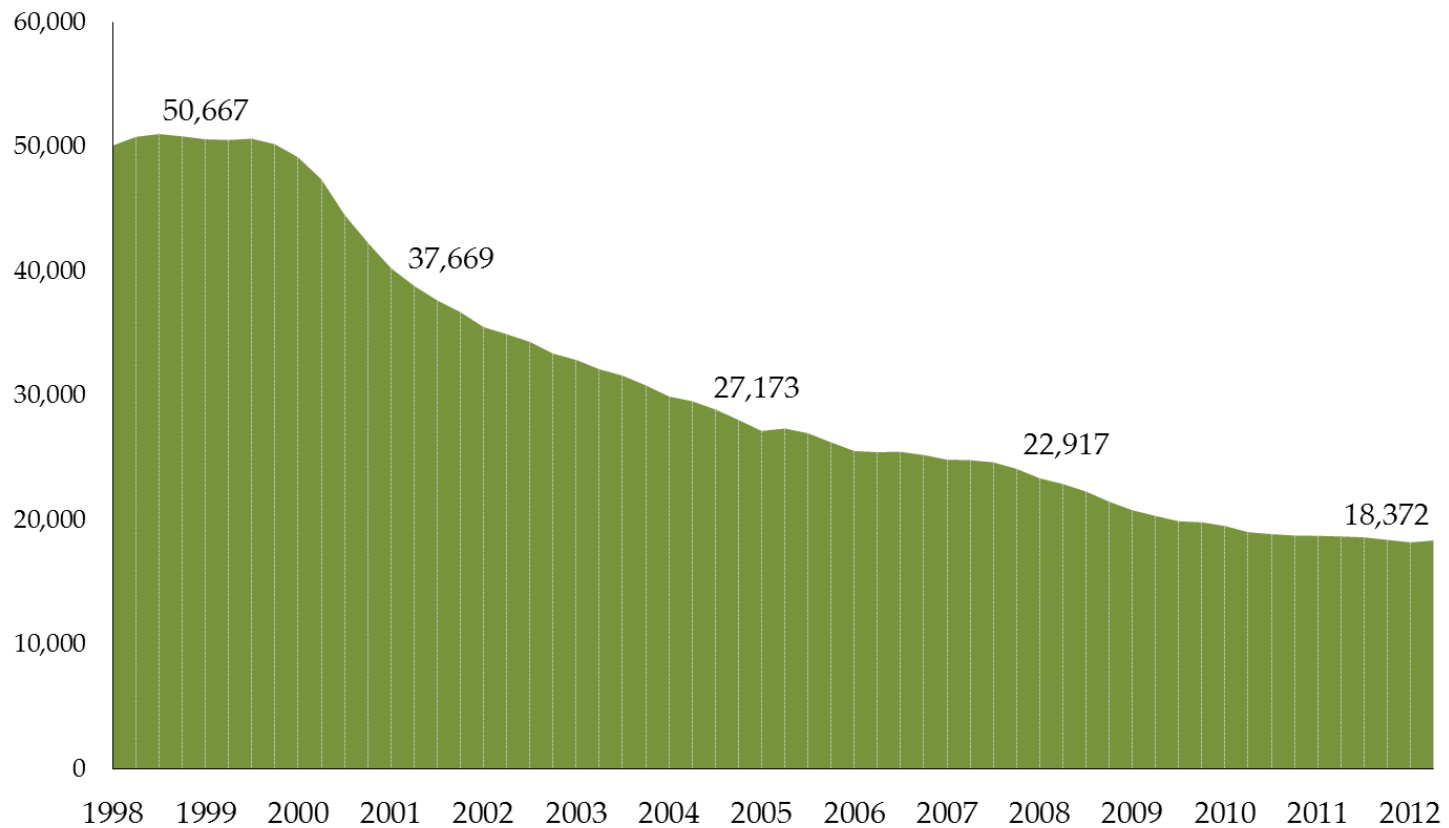
- Discuss the potential for LA County to be more strategic and deliberate in the delivery of voluntary, early intervention/prevention services to children prior to DCFS involvement

NUMBERS:

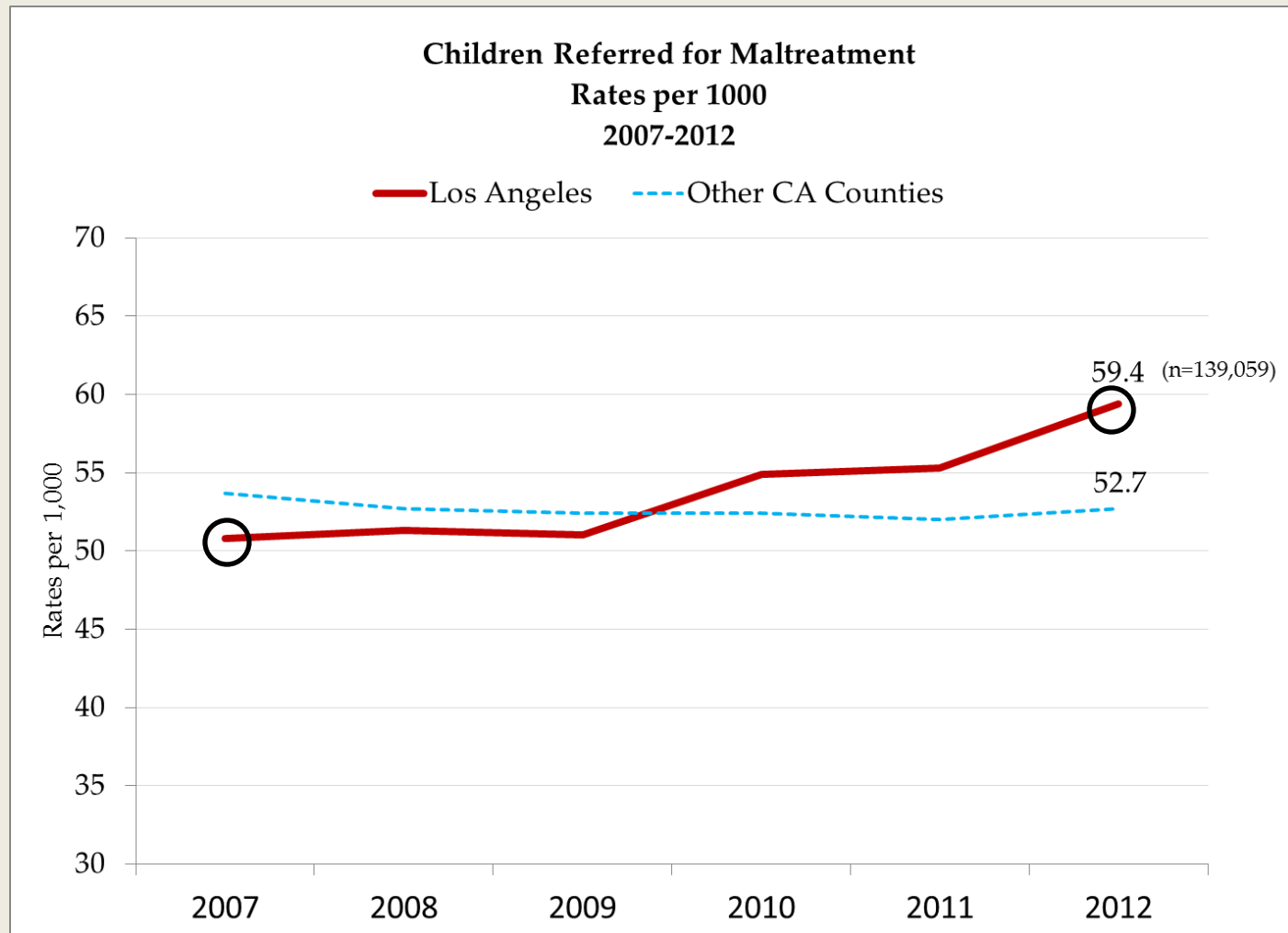
A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF LA DATA

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER OF WHERE WE WERE...

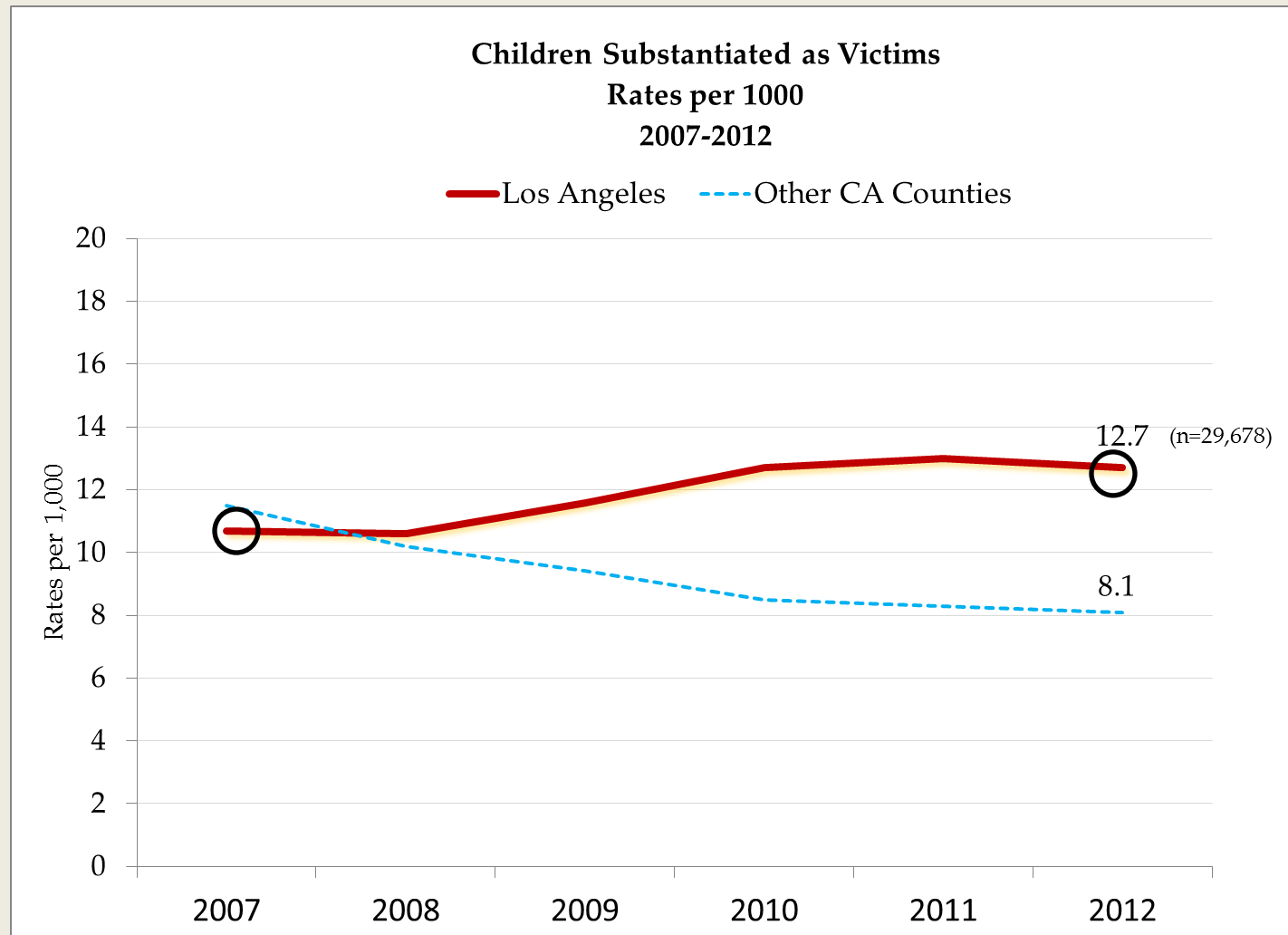
**Los Angeles County:
Foster Care Caseload Over Time**



REFERRED AS POSSIBLE VICTIMS OF MALTREATMENT

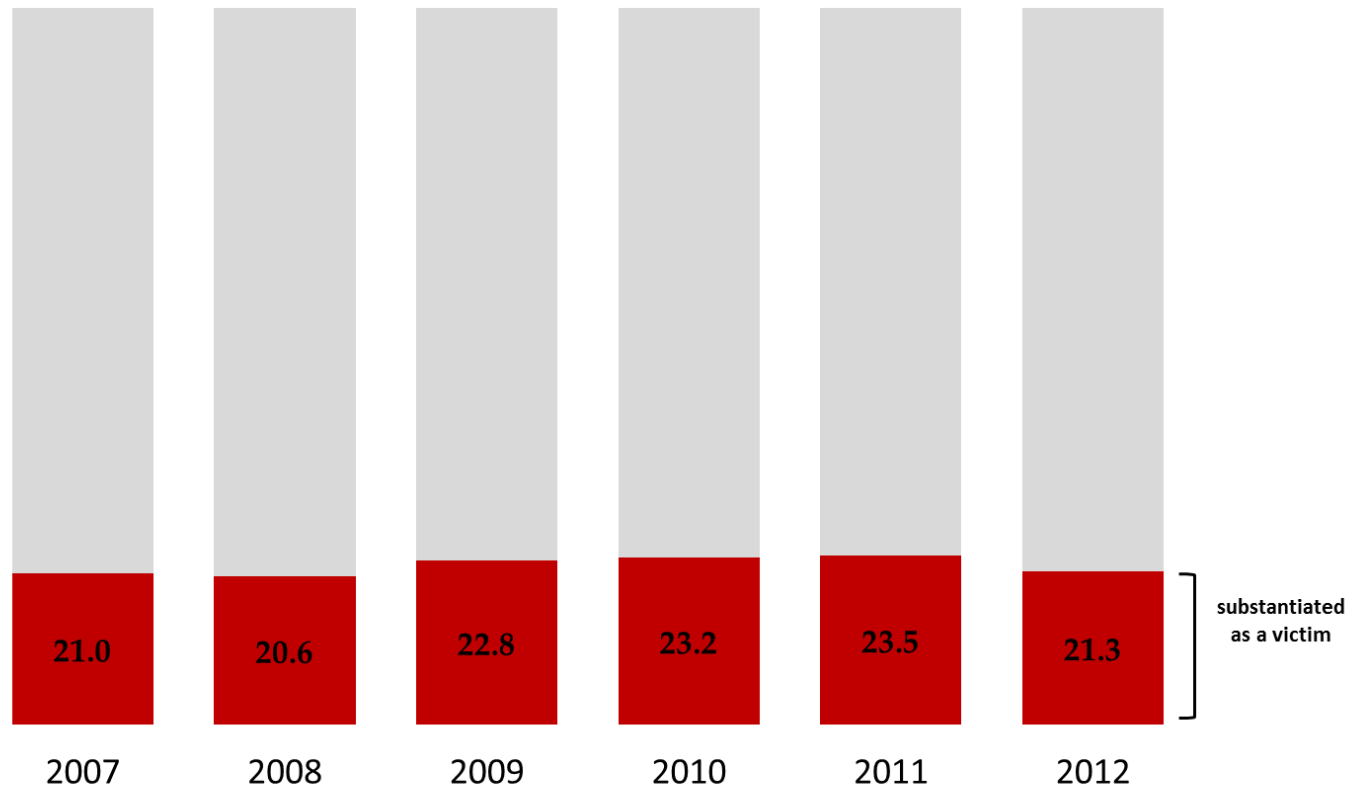


SUBSTANTIATED VICTIMS OF MALTREATMENT

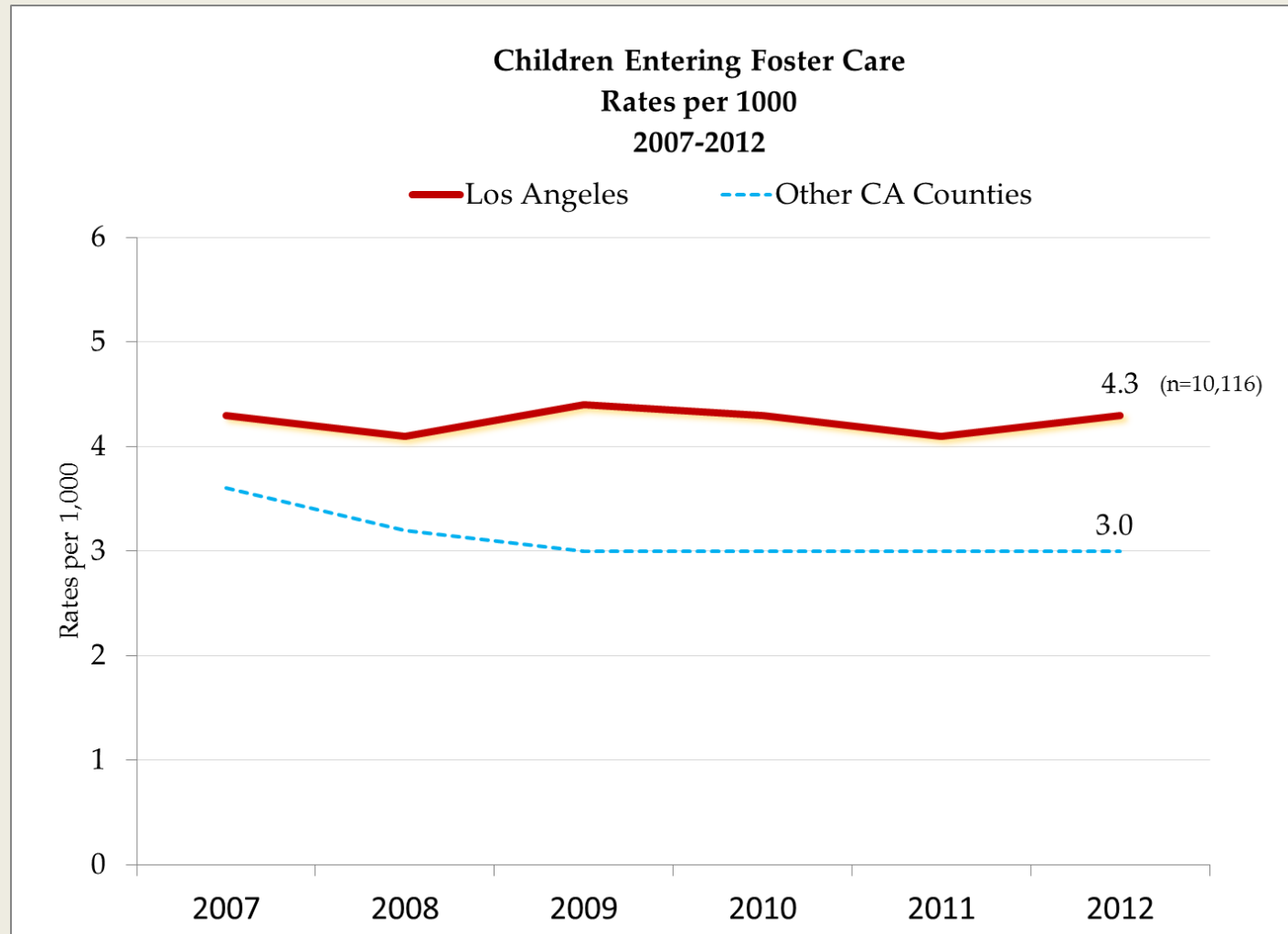


PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN SUBSTANTIATED AMONG THOSE REFERRED

Percentage of Children Substantiated Among All Referred
Los Angeles
2007-2012

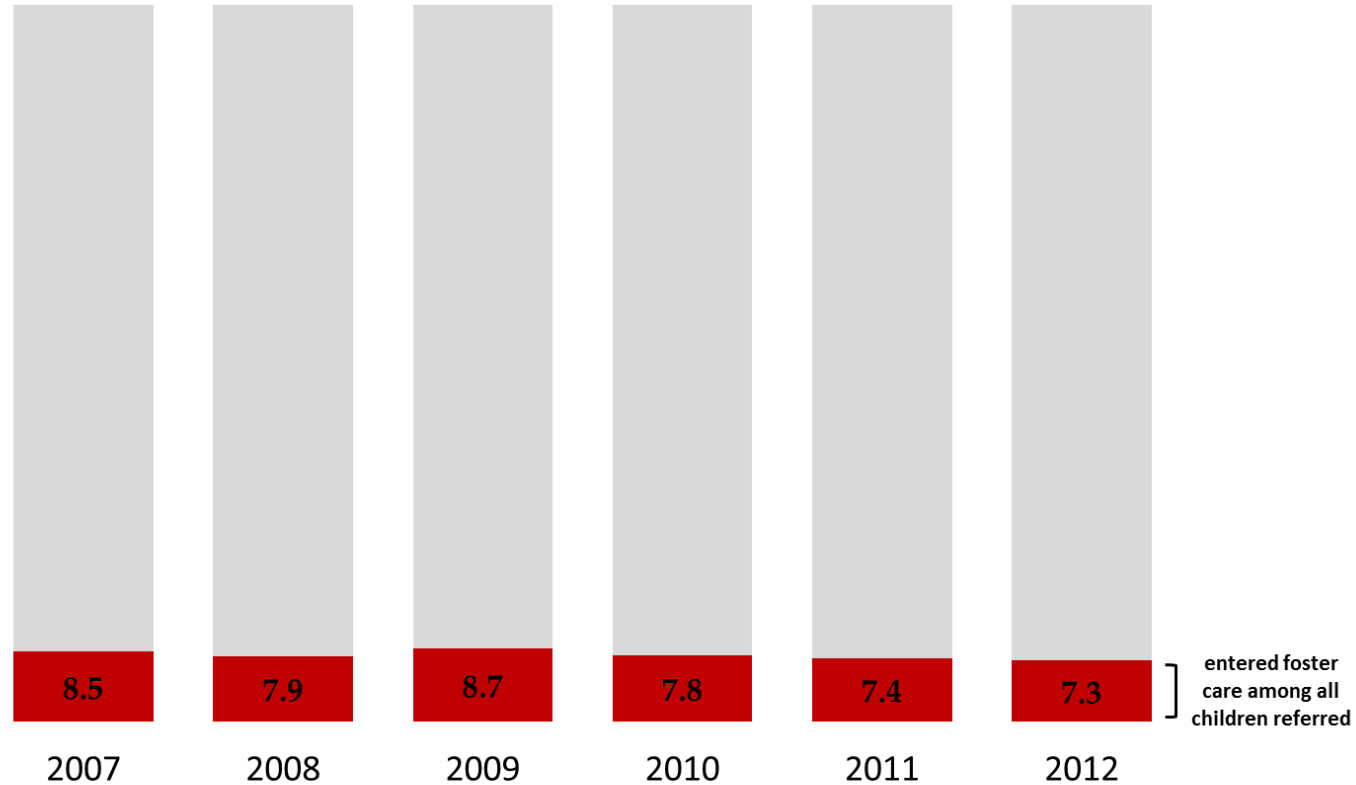


CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE

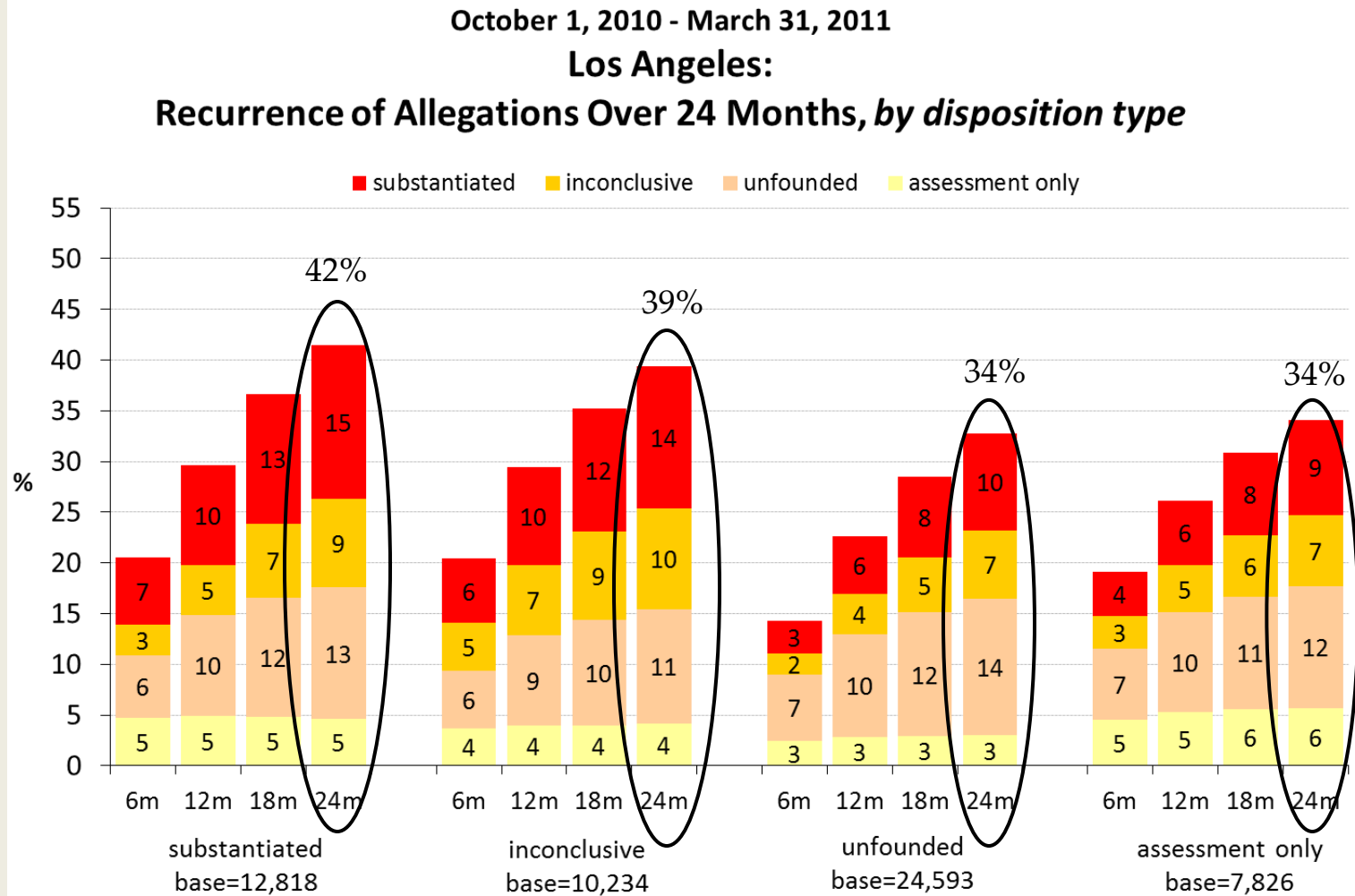


PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE AMONG THOSE REFERRED

Percentage of Children Entering Foster Care Among All Referred
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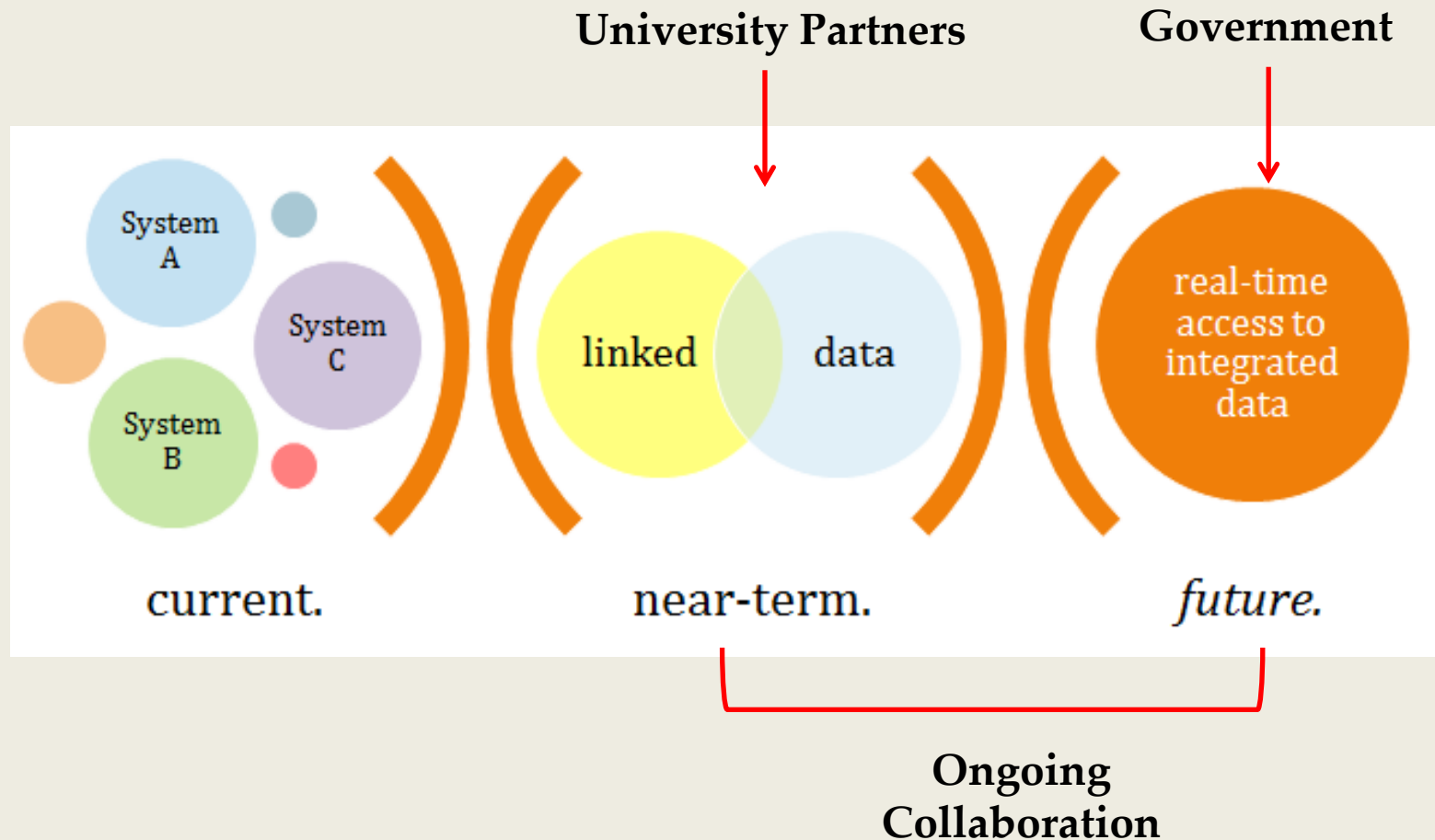


RECURRENCE OF MALTREATMENT



PERSPECTIVE:
A POPULATION-BASED AND
LONGITUDINAL
CONSIDERATION OF RISK BASED
ON LINKED DATA

INTEGRATED DATA...STARTING WITH BIRTH RECORDS



A “SNAPSHOT” OF CHILDREN INVOLVED WITH CPS

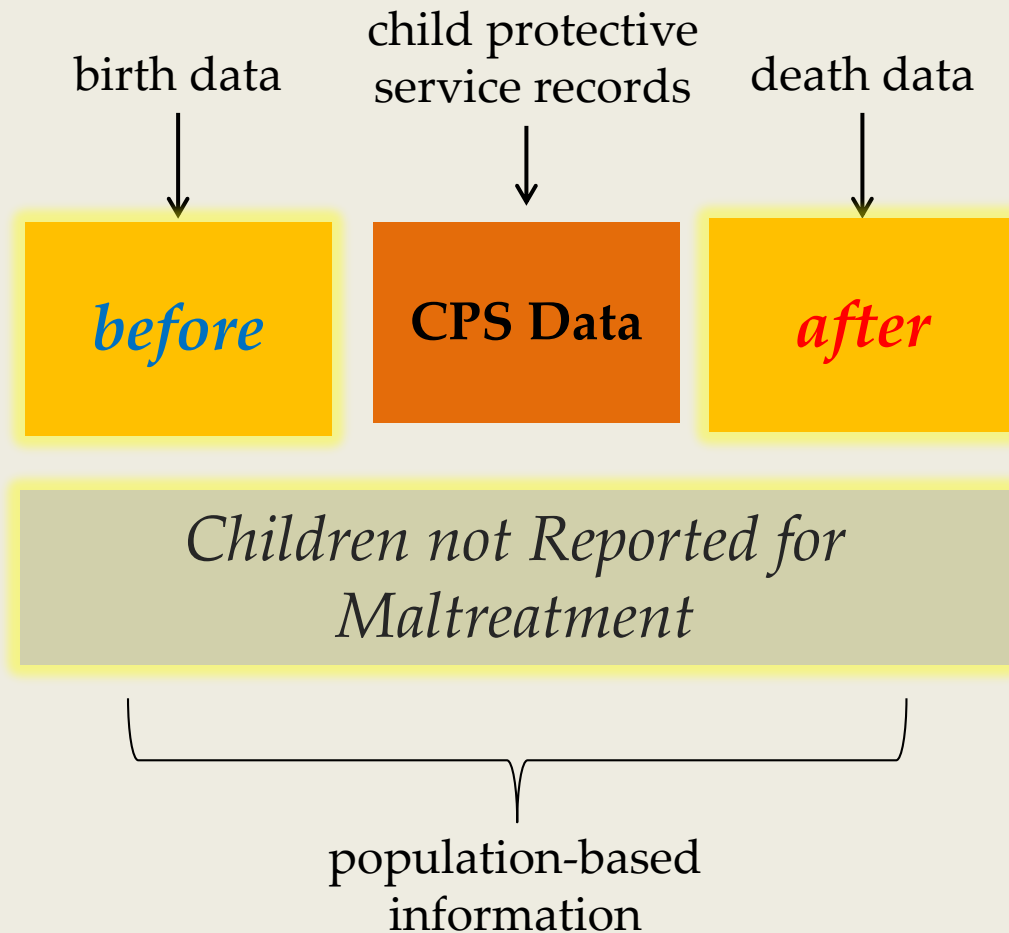
before

CPS Data

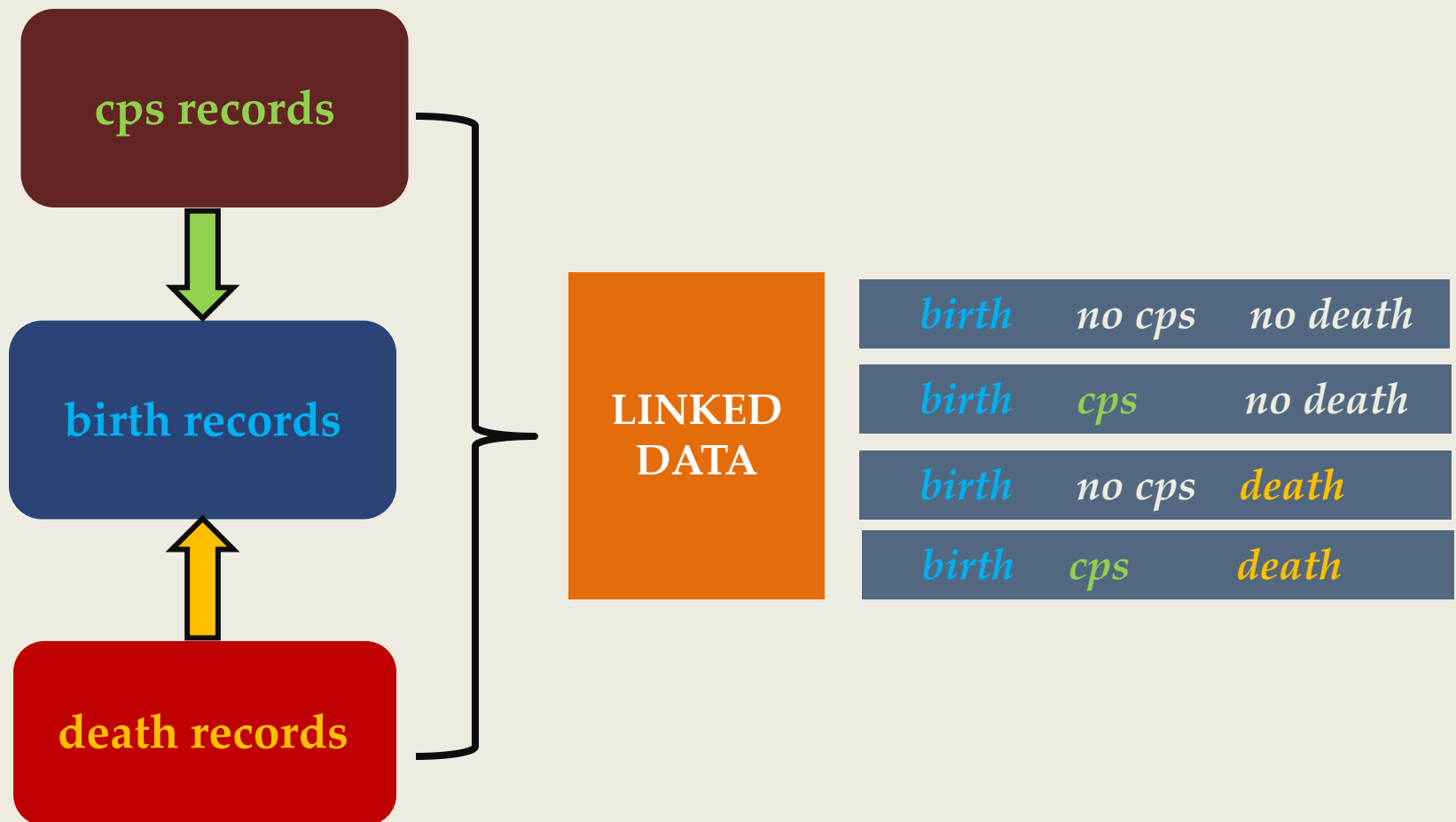
after

*Children not Reported for
Maltreatment*

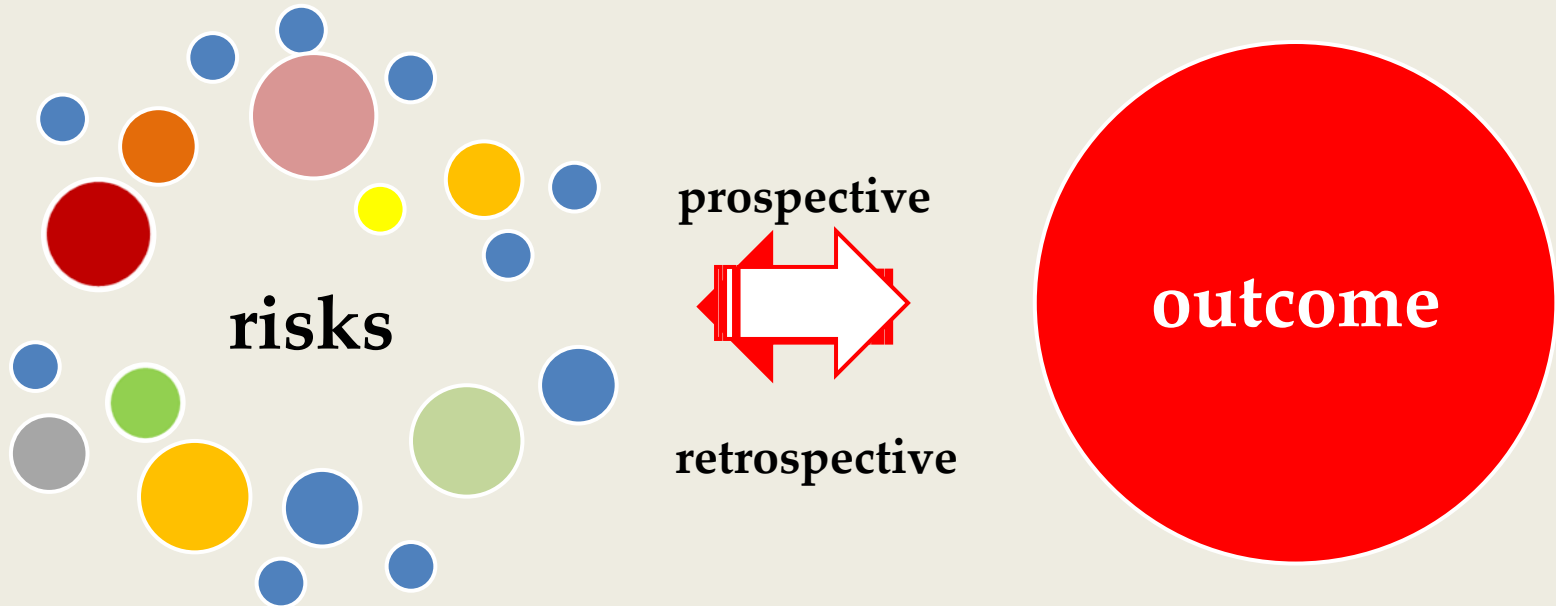
A LONGITUDINAL UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN



LINKED DATASET



RETROSPECTIVE VS. PROSPECTIVE

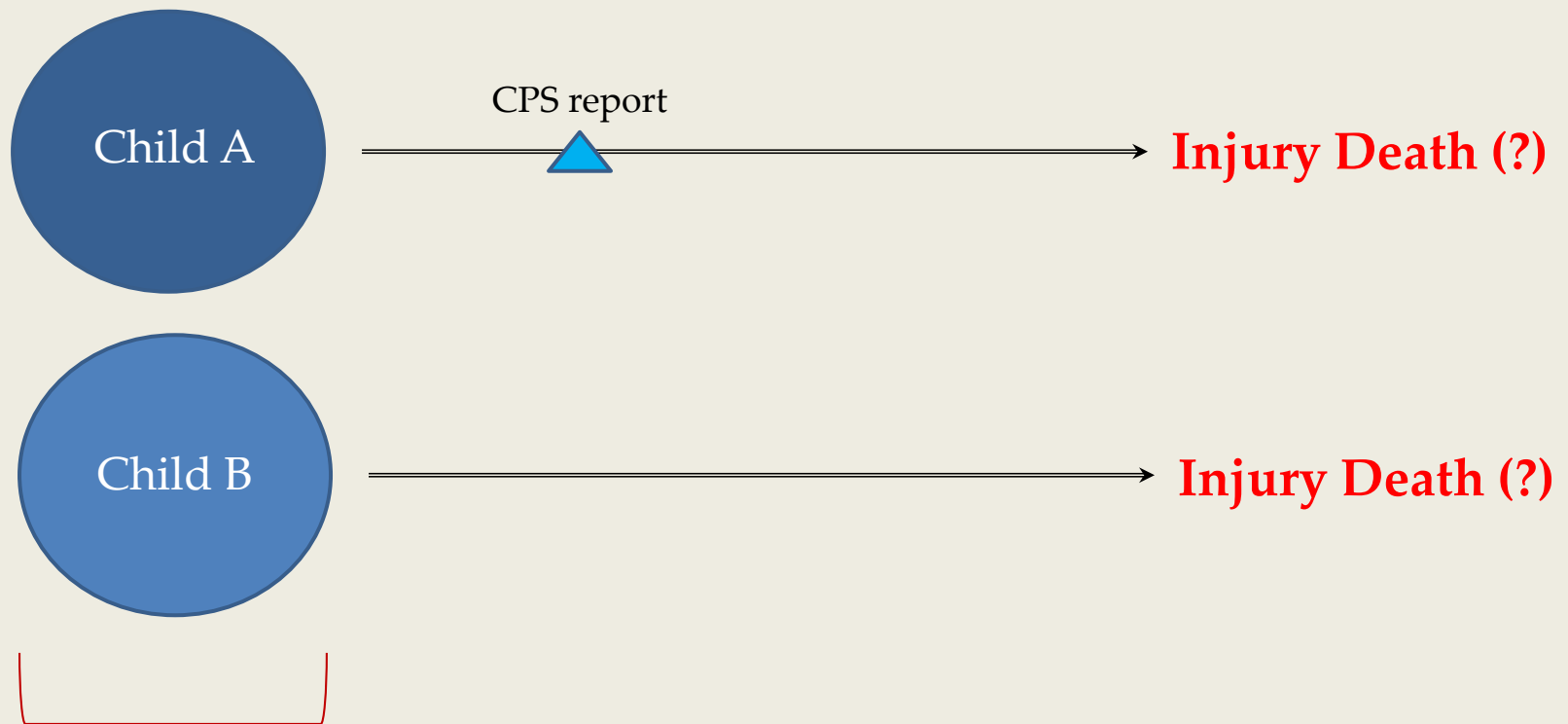


CONVERSATION #1:

A POPULATION-BASED LOOK AT FATALITY RISK

CHILD INJURY DEATH

A *mortality-based* standard for evaluating parental behavior may be the closest we can get to “culture-free” definitions of neglect and abuse (S.R. Johannson, 1987)

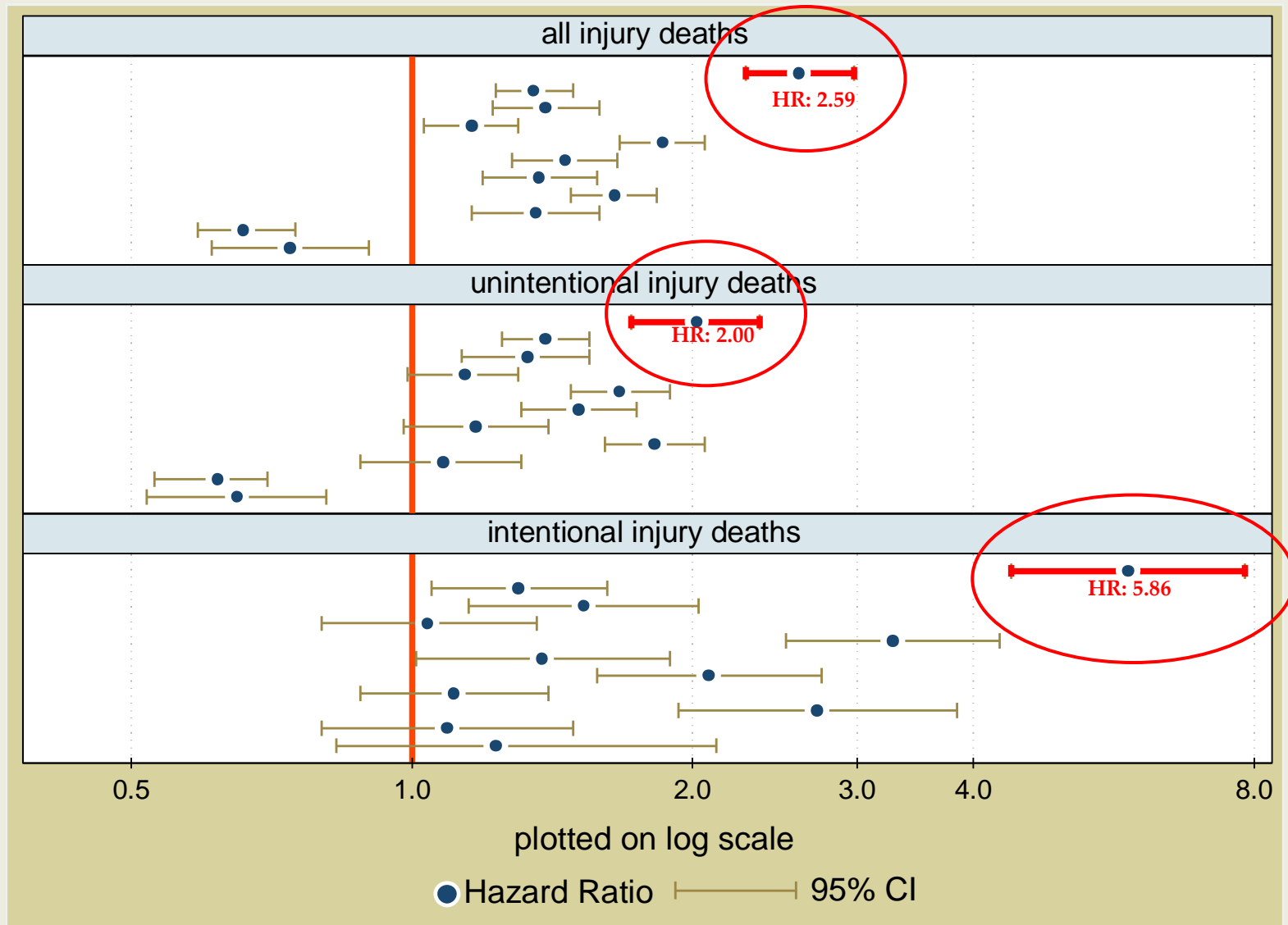


Risk factors associated with both death,
and being reported for maltreatment

KEY FINDINGS (CALIFORNIA)

- After adjusting for other risk factors at birth, a previous referral to CPS (regardless of disposition) emerged as the strongest predictor of injury death during a child's first five years of life
- A previous referral to CPS was significantly associated with a child's risk of both unintentional and intentional injury death

ADJUSTED RATE OF INJURY DEATH FOR CHILDREN WITH A PRIOR ALLEGATION OF MALTREATMENT, BY CAUSE OF DEATH



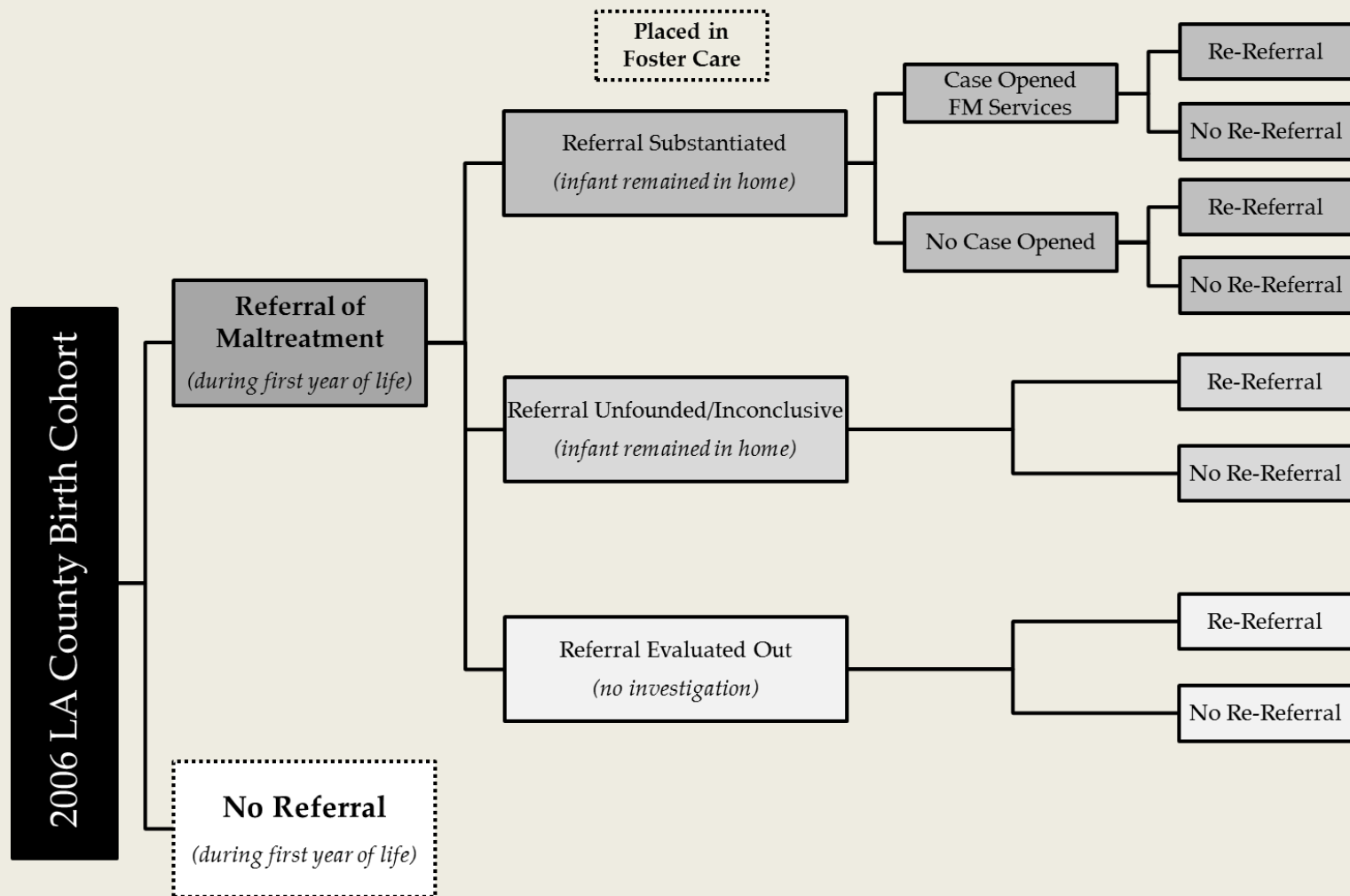
OTHER FATALITY FINDINGS

(CALIFORNIA)

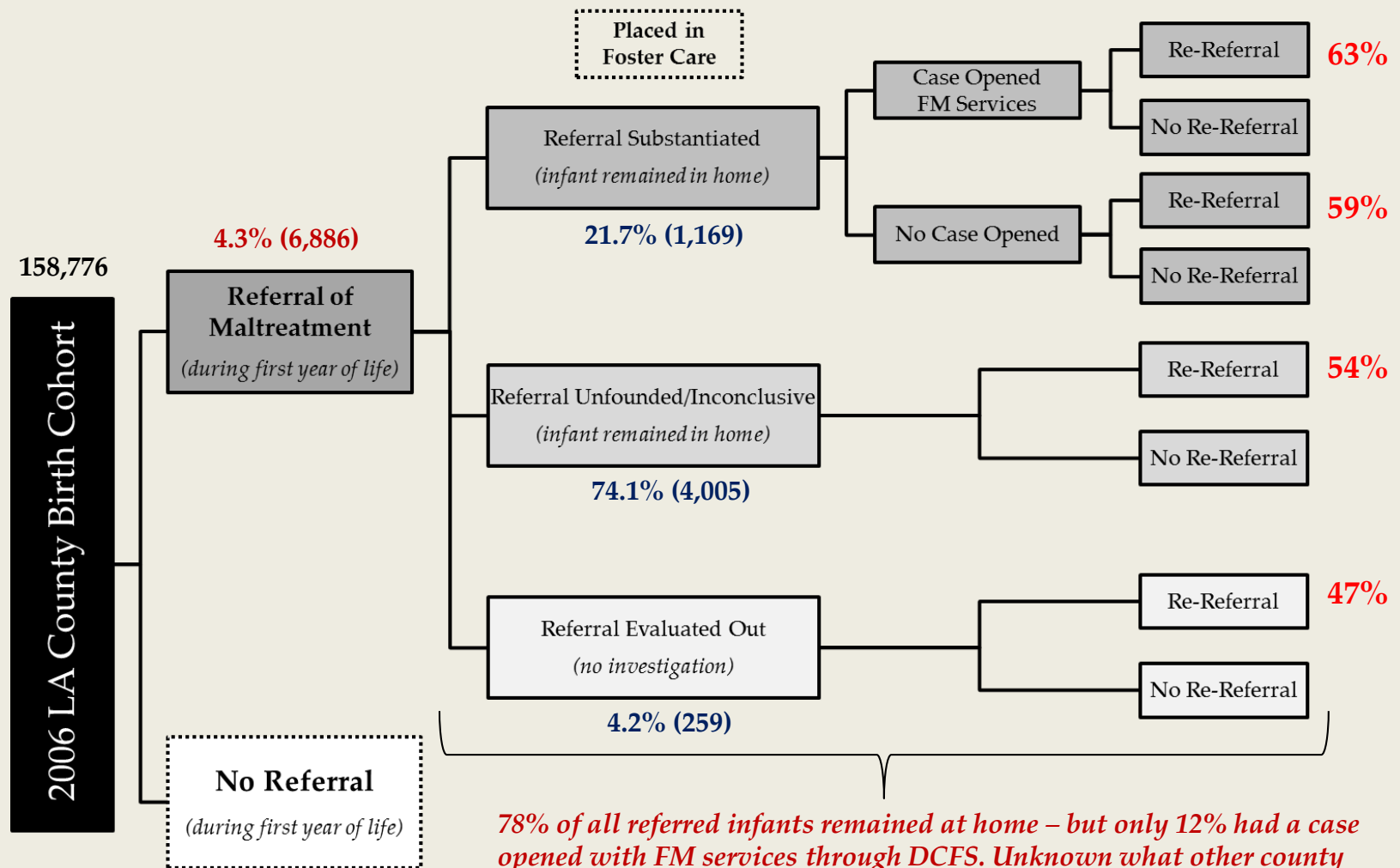
- Absolute vs. Relative Rates of death (a key point)
- Children with referrals screened out over the phone
- Physical Abuse vs. Neglect
- Other forms of death (e.g., SIDS, accidental asphyxiation)
- We are far too narrow if we think of child safety and well-being based only on intentional or maltreatment-related deaths

CONVERSATION #2: OPPORTUNITIES

AN EXAMPLE FROM LA COUNTY



FROM BIRTH TO FIRST (AND OFTEN REPEAT) REFERRALS...



78% of all referred infants remained at home – but only 12% had a case opened with FM services through DCFS. Unknown what other county agencies provided services...

SUMMARY

- Overall, more than half of children referred to DCFS as infants and remaining in the home were re-referred by age five
- Only 12% of all infants who remained in the home following their first referral had a case opened with formal services through DCFS
- Given the physical vulnerability that defines the first five years of life, as well as the growing body of research linking early childhood adversities to developmental deficiencies into adulthood, there is perhaps no greater opportunity to positively intervene than at and shortly after birth
- **Isn't it possible to do more?**

A DEVELOPING IDEA:
TARGETED PREVENTION WITH
THE EXPLICIT GOAL OF
REDUCING MALTREATMENT

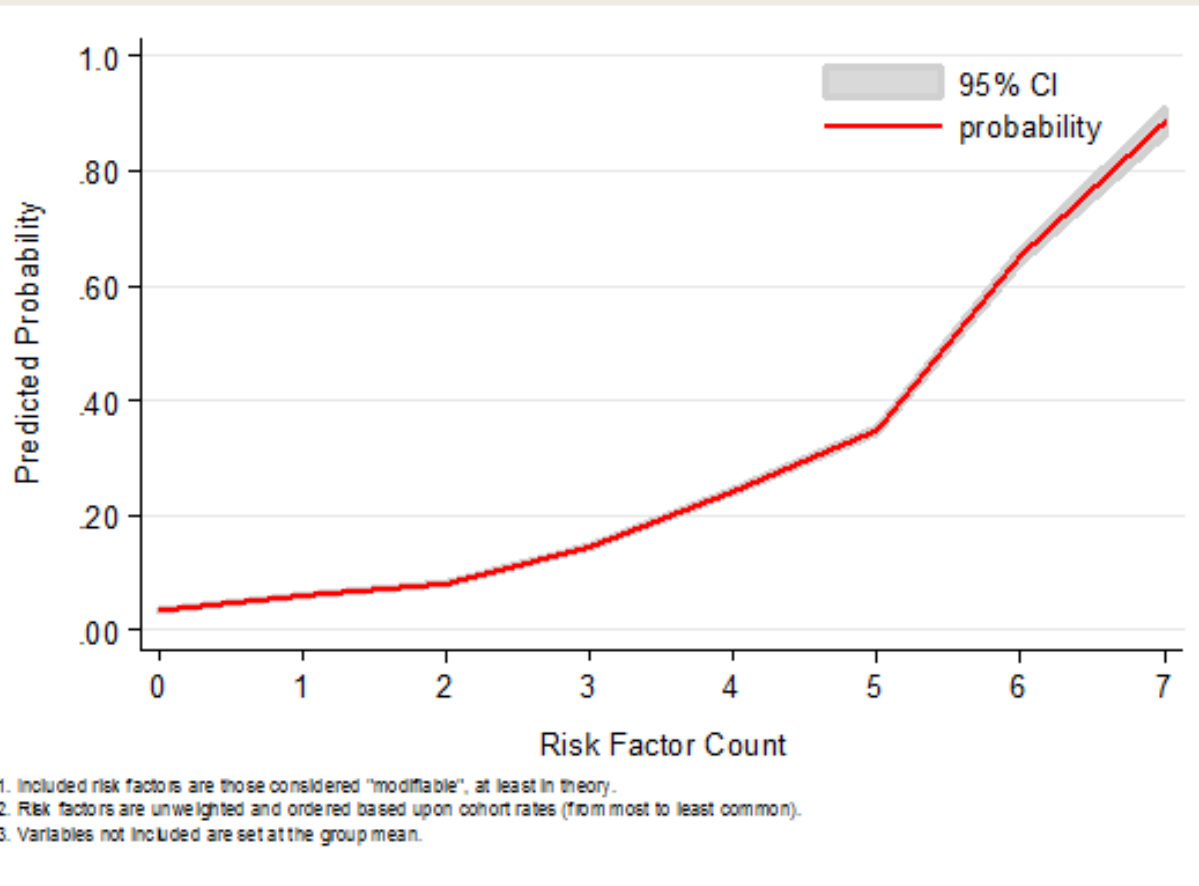
CASE STUDY FROM NEW ZEALAND

- **Reality:** 83% of children substantiated as victims of maltreatment by age 5 could be found in an open public benefit case between birth and age 2
- **Question:** Could the country's integrated data system be used to develop a statistical model to predict which of these children would later become victims?
- **Results:** A maltreatment model was developed that achieved a similar accuracy as digital or film mammography as a method for predicting breast cancer among women without symptoms.
 - *Prevalence of maltreatment among children 0-5 in NZ is more than 20 times that of breast cancer among women 50-60 years who are offered screening*
- **Next steps...**

PARALLEL THOUGHT EXERCISE IN CALIFORNIA...

- Compared with the demographics of the birth cohort as a whole, young children referred to CPS are defined by the presence of multiple risk factors
- A computerized/standardized tool can never replace more comprehensive assessments of a family's strengths and risks...but against an invariable backdrop of limited resources, the ability to prioritize services and adjust levels of case monitoring in order to meet the greater needs of a targeted swath of at-risk children and families holds real potential
- **Feasibility of using universally collected birth record data to target children and families for services?**

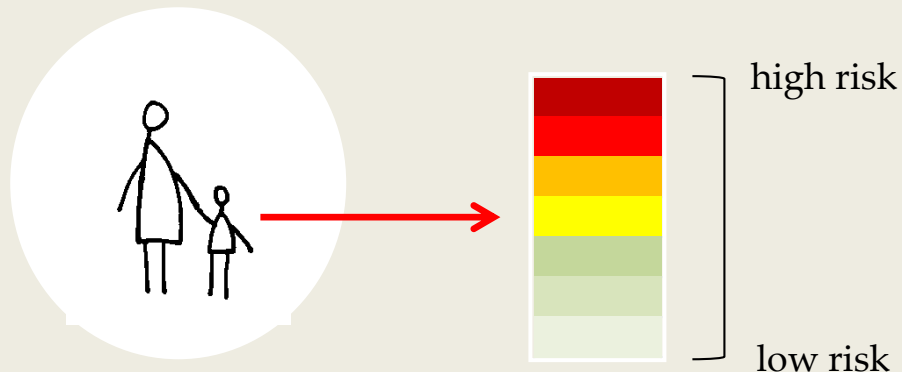
PRESENCE OF MULTIPLE RISK FACTORS...



High Risk on Every Modifiable Risk Factor: 89% probability of CPS report
Low Risk on Every Modifiable Risk Factor: 3% probability of CPS report

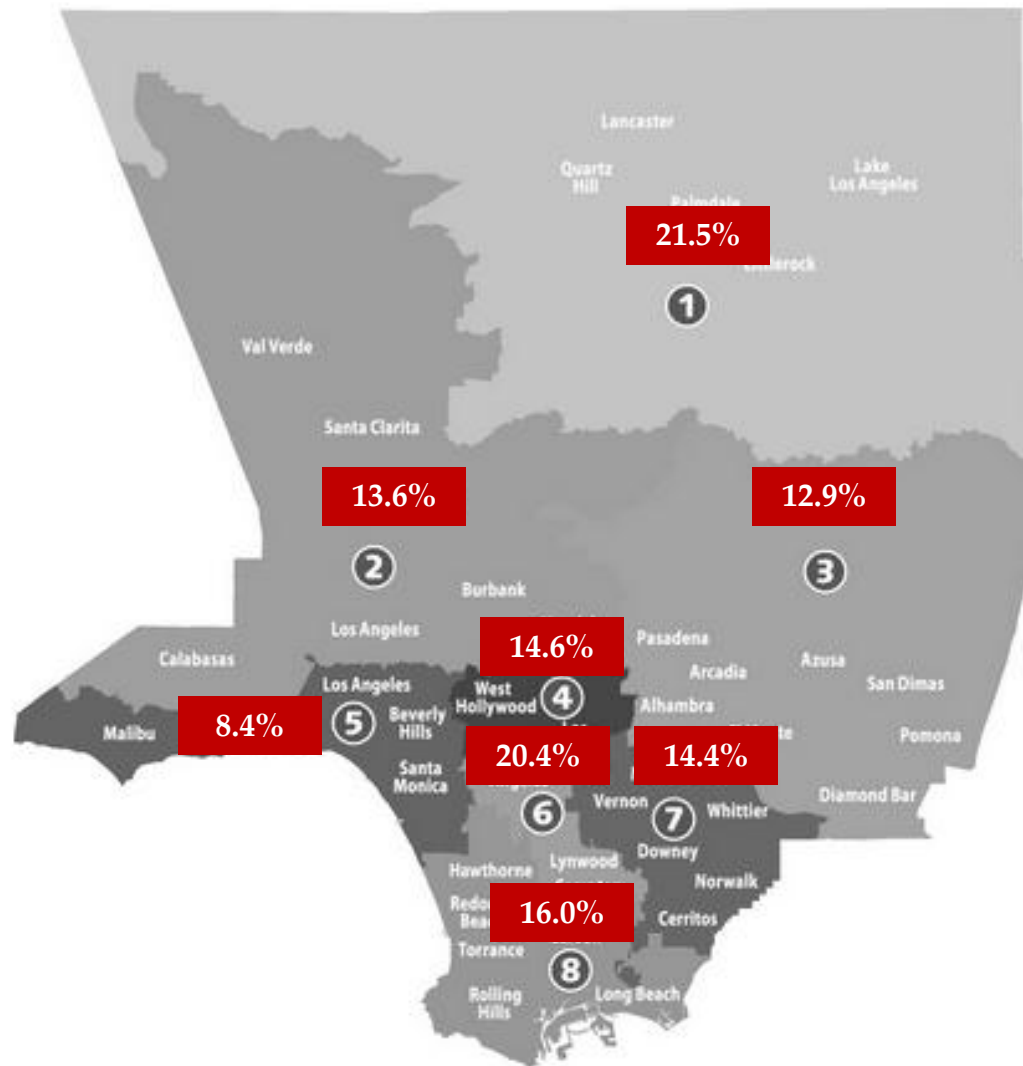
CURRENT WORK

- Statistical models were developed using birth record information to predict the likelihood that a child would be reported to child protective services (CPS) as an alleged victim of maltreatment before age 5
- These predictive models focus solely on identifying characteristics (predictors) that serve to risk stratify children in the overall birth cohort based on the likelihood that a child will be reported to CPS.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...

- Child maltreatment is a public health problem of increasingly realized scope and significance
- Targeted, early intervention investments in infants and young children are needed to improve the health, safety, and well-being of LA's children throughout the life course
 - *Ensuring existing programs have the capacity to meet the needs of these highest risk children; monitoring success and expanding high-quality programs; aligning policies and programmatic priorities across agencies*
- It is possible to risk stratify children at high risk of maltreatment (and with a heightened risk of death) on the day they are born
 - **There is no reason to wait for a first referral to DCFS.**



- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| 1 Antelope Valley
(21.5%) | 4 Metro
(14.6%) | 7 East
(14.4%) |
| 2 San Fernando Valley
(13.6%) | 5 West
(8.4%) | 8 South Bay
<i>includes Catalina Island</i>
(16.0%) |
| 3 San Gabriel Valley
(12.9%) | 6 South
(20.4%) | |

CUMULATIVE
PERCENTAGE
OF CHILDREN
BORN IN LA
COUNTY IN
2006/2007 AND
REFERRED FOR
ABUSE OR
NEGLECT
BEFORE AGE 5:

BY SERVICE
PLANNING
(SPA) AREA OF
BIRTH

QUESTIONS?

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<http://sowkweb.usc.edu/>

http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/